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PUBLICITY METHODS FOR LIBRARIES AND LIBRARY ASSOCIATIONS

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"Advertising methods are capable of a greater service to society than has been indicated. They will eventually form the basis for permanent policies which will operate to reform the processes of society in certain essential particulars. Thus far the students of publicity have limited their hopes to its temporary, or timely, effects. . . . . It is not yet much thought of in connection with fundamental plans for the permanent betterment of society, as a necessity in any plan that requires the cooperation of the people. For such purposes advertising must eventually be reckoned as one of the prime conditions."—French, Advertising: the social and economic problem.

The purpose of this paper, introducing a discussion of publicity methods for libraries and library associations, is:

1. To facilitate discussion by defining terms.
2. To state some general principles and observations of library publicity.
3. To state some facts that deserve attention.
4. To recommend that the A. L. A. Publicity Committee be instructed to study and report a comprehensive publicity policy for the American Library Association, the state library associations and commissions, and local libraries.
5. To recommend the continuation of the publicity efforts begun in 1914 and 1915 by the A. L. A. Publicity Committee, as outlined in the 1915 report of the committee.
6. To suggest some of the authorities on advertising and publicity.

I. Definitions

To help in arriving at satisfactory definitions, the following quotations are given from authorities:

1. Advertising does not consist merely in attracting attention.—Mahin (full references listed at end of paper).
2. Advertising is an intelligent outlay for securing definite, valuable results.—Cherington.
3. Advertising is a method of influencing people.—French.
4. Advertising is the accomplishment of definite purposes—by molding the minds of groups of people.—Mahin.
5. The multiplying power of advertising.—Mahin.
6. Advertising is not a material substance, but service to a group.—Mahin.
7. Advertising is service salesmanship directed at a group.—Mahin.
8. Advertising is a public declaration of service.—Tipper.
9. Advertising may be stated as the endeavor to secure a public opinion upon a business, a product, or a certain phase of human life. The salesman's effort is the endeavor to accumulate a large private opinion upon the matter.—Tipper.
10. Publicity is magnified advertising. . . . Advertising has related itself more specifically to the direction of individual human habits. In contrast with advertising, . . . publicity . . . involves all the processes of advertising, the principles of which, however, operate on a higher plane and in a larger way. Thus advertising *per se* makes itself felt in the creation of a vogue for a particular article or proposition, while publicity enters as a factor in developing the environment in which man can live.—Hess.

In this paper effort is made to use terms as follows, and it is hoped that in the discussion these same terms and meanings will be used:

Publicity—the general term; magnified advertising; involves all the processes of advertising and of cooperation with the public.

Newspaper publicity—the use of newspaper news space in obtaining public interest, use, and support; implies no payment of money for space.

Magazine publicity—the use of magazine reading-matter space in obtaining interest, use, and support by the special classes reached; implies no payment of money for space.

Advertising—a specific form of publicity, but itself a general term with many subdivisions; implies the expenditure of money for printing, for materials, or for space.

Newspaper advertising—the use of newspaper advertising space at regular paid rates.

Street-car advertising—the use of street-car cards at usual rates.

Exterior advertising—the use of outdoor billboards, electric signs, window displays, etc.

Interior advertising—the use of posters, placards, book displays, etc., within the library.

Printed matter—the use of folders, book lists, bulletins ("house organs"), handbooks, etc., distributed at the library or by mail.

Public lectures and exhibits—cooperation by the library in obtaining, advertising, entertaining, and following up lectures and exhibits. Almost general enough to be called *publicity.*

Public conveniences—the provision of writing rooms, photographic copying machines, public stenographers, etc., is cooperation and service that results in publicity.

Work with schools and clubs—is library service with strong publicity value.

II. Some General Principles and Observations

1. Publicity must be for library work, not for the library worker.

2. Library service must "make good." It is the salesmanship division.

3. Equally, publicity must not outrun service. "Service to the consumer should be the beginning, the expression, and the 'follow-up' of every advertisement."—Mahin.

4. The reflex influence of library publicity is probably one of its chief values. To obtain public cooperation and to advertise our service means exacting knowledge of our public, of our resources, and of the capabilities of all library workers.

5. Newspaper publicity, like news, is simple statement of facts. The public draws its own proper conclusion if there is simple statement and proper analysis of facts.

6. Ten tests for an advertisement, given by Mahin, apply equally to all forms of publicity: 1) Is your advertisement institutional, does it appeal strongly to the group spirit? 2) Is your copy natural? 3) Is it specific? 4) Is it timely? 5) Is it pertinent? 6) Is it consistent? 7) Is it persistent? 8) Is it authoritative? 9) Is it plausible? 10) Is it sincere?

III. Some Facts Deserving Attention

1. The average commercial business spends for advertising from three to five per cent of its total sales. Thirteen typical libraries, reported in the "A. L. A. Bulletin," November, 1915, spent an average of .0069 per cent (after making correction in Scranton figures) for their bulletins, or "house organs." This does not represent all that these libraries spend for publicity and advertising; but how many libraries spend two or three per cent for publicity?

Reports on annual expenditures for publicity by eleven of these thirteen libraries give the following facts, among which perhaps the most significant is that few of our libraries know how much their publicity actually costs:

Brookline, Massachusetts: Only expenditure for publicity is for the Book list, published four times a year, 6000 copies, distributed throughout Brookline by the police. Total cost, 1915, $487.20. Per cent of total expenditure is .0139.

Grand Rapids: Total publicity expense, last year, for monthly bulletin, lecture announcements, and book lists, but not including annual report, $1009.06. Per cent of total is .0188.

Jersey City: Total publicity expenditure, 1914, for twenty-fifth anniversary celebration, bulletin, and other printing (part not properly chargeable as advertising is offset by items under other headings which contributed to advertising), $909.60. Per cent of total is .0142.

Lynn, Massachusetts: Local press very generous to library. Total expenditures for all printing, 1915, was $232.40. Per cent of total is .0082.

Newark: Total publicity expenditures, 1914, for "Newarker" (deducting subscription receipts), lists, report, signs, $2045.76. Per cent of total is .0145.

Pittsburgh: Accounting system makes no specific entry for publicity. Per cent of total expenditure used for monthly bulletin is .0026.

Portland, Oregon: Expenditure for printing, 1914-5, was $1307.10, including bulletin and printed book lists, but not including multigraphed lists and stationery. Impossible to separate items. Per cent of total is .0082.

St. Louis: Estimated publicity expenditure, 1914-5, including report, bulletin, book lists, leaflets, posters, $3,257. Per cent of total is .013.

Salem: Total expenditures, 1914, for bulletin and book list, $337.76. Per cent of total is .0183.

Scranton: Total publicity expense, bulletin only, 1914, was $68.25. Per cent of total is .003.

Springfield, Massachusetts: Total expense for printing bulletin and lists, last year, was $637. Adding cost of preparing weekly lists for newspapers, bulletin, and other lists, $600, the total publicity expenditure was $1237. Per cent of total is .019.

2. Publicity is particularly a small library problem. The small libraries of the country are doing less publicity, and need more of it, than the larger libraries here represented. This is a personal belief, and most of you will agree. These figures, from the U. S. Bureau of Education statistics for the year 1913, are proof that the smaller libraries get less use, at least:

The 2188 libraries of from 1000 to 5000 volumes had an average circulation of 1.62 times per volume. These small libraries had an average income of $733.

The 1844 libraries of 5000 volumes or more had an average circulation of 1.95 times per volume. Statistics for average income are not given, but these larger libraries paid their librarians an average of $871 salary,—more than the whole income of the average small library.

Not only is there less use and appreciation of the small libraries by the general public; there are more small libraries to be developed, and less support. Take building maintenance, a pitiful salary, and books out of $733, and what is left of money or spirit for publicity? Publicity for these libraries can and must come from without.

3. The average professional publicity man, when acquainted with library facts and literature, expresses astonishment that libraries do not go after more carefully planned publicity. This in spite of the large amount of space devoted to local libraries by their respective local newspapers.

IV. A Publicity Inquiry

This paper recommends that the A. L. A. Publicity Committee be instructed to study and report a comprehensive publicity plan for the American Library Association, the state library associations and commissions, and local libraries. Such an inquiry might include investigation and report of the attitude of librarians toward publicity, the attitude of newspaper and publicity men toward libraries and library news, and the amount of informed interest in libraries possessed by the average man and woman of all the various classes and masses of people. Questions like these have to be answered: What have we got for the hundred million Americans? What do they know about libraries? Can we make them want our service? How shall we obtain their cooperation and appreciation of the untold wealth of libraries?

V. Conserve Work Already Begun

In the meantime, the work so well begun in 1906 by the Committee on Publicity (Messrs. Dana, Ranck, and Wright) and so suggestively outlined in the A. L. A. Proceedings for 1906 (pp. 213-218), and the work of the Publicity Committee of 1914 and 1915, should be conserved and continued. The suggestions and recommendations of the 1915 report are here repeated:

1. Organize the work so that we shall do it all ourselves except stenographic help.

2. Divide the work, at conference time, under the direction of chairman of the committee, into at least three parts, with a man in charge of each:

a) Special articles and summarizing reports, such as this year's reports in the Dial, Nation, and Survey. Summarizing articles, with local "leads," to be sent to the home papers of conference members.

b) Advance abstracts to be insisted upon and to be sent, with local "leads," to the states interested in a given speaker or topic.

c) The same preparation and material for local newspapers and Associated Press, as this year at Berkeley.

3. The committee to be active throughout the year for which it is appointed (preferably from about September to September). Two lines of work might be conducted:

a) Preparation and distribution to newspapers and magazines of a news bulletin, similar to those sent out by the American Civic Association, University of Minnesota, and others. A sheet of the Minnesota size (12x18 inches, 4 columns) can be printed for $9 for 500 copies; second class mailing privileges could be obtained. From four to six issues per year would serve.

b) Collection and placing of special "Library" articles in periodicals. The committee might serve as a year-round clearing house for papers and addresses and ideas from the various state and sectional meetings and from individuals.

4. The foregoing takes no account of the valuable possibilities in cooperative publication of posters, lists, envelope enclosures, street-car cards, and other printed matter. Neither does it consider the interesting possibilities of an advisory publicity bureau for American libraries. It is suggested by the present committee that the proposal of the Pacific-Northwest Library Association might be tried out by the A. L. A. Publicity Committee, assigning this work to a special member of the committee. The present committee believes that a permanent publicity officer of the American Library Association, working along the lines suggested above, would more than earn his salary almost from the first (by which is meant, *save* his salary), in enlarged incomes for local libraries, in increased membership in the American Library Association, and in the savings accruing from cooperative printing.

VI. References

The following references are suggested for reading and thought:

Cherington, Paul T. Advertising as a business force. 1913. Doubleday, Page.

French, George. Advertising: the social and economic problem. 1915. Ronald Press.

Hess, Herbert W. Productive advertising. 1915. Lippincott.

Hollingworth, Harry L. Advertising and selling: principles of appeal and response. 1913. Appleton.

Mahin, John Lee. Advertising—selling the consumer. 1914. Doubleday, Page.

Men and religion forward movement. Messages, v. 7, Church and the press. 1912. Association Press.

Smith, Herbert H. Publicity and progress. 1915. Doran.

Tipper, Harry. The new business. 1914. Doubleday, Page.

REGISTRATION OF PROPOSED BIBLIOGRAPHIES

Only five or six have registered proposed bibliographies at A. L. A. headquarters, according to the plan suggested in the November Bulletin. Surely there must be more bibliographies than that in preparation by members of the Association. We feel that a central registration would prevent the occasional unfortunate duplication of work, and we urge all who have bibliographical work under way or in contemplation to record the fact on a standard size catalog card and forward it to the A. L. A. office. The secretary will regard all information as confidential, if so requested.

NECROLOGY.

Ogden, Lucy, assistant Division of Prints, Library of Congress. Died Nov. 10, 1915.

Parsons, Arthur Jeffrey, chief Division of Prints, Library of Congress. Died Nov. 5, 1915.

Schwab, John Christopher, librarian Yale university. Died Jan. 12, 1916.